

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O R 081125Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9426

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC IMMEDIATE

COMUSTDC IMMEDIATE

COMUSMACTHAI

S E C R E T TAIPEI 4801

EXDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILL, TW, TH, JA

SUBJ: APPROACH TO PREMIER RE REDEPLOYMENT OF C-130

SQUADRONS ON TAIWAN

REF: STATE 154313

1. I CALLED ON PREMIER CHIANG AUGUST 8 TO NOTIFY HIM THAT THE REMAINDER OF THE 374TH TAW WOULD BE REDEPLOYED FROM TAIWAN BY DECEMBER 31. I EXPLAINED OUR ACTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARA 5 OF REFTTEL, ADDING THAT I WANTED TO TELL HIM IMMEDIATELY SO THAT THE ROC WOULD HAVE ADEQUATE TIME FOR PREPARATION. I MENTIONED THAT THE CONTEMPLATED REDEPLOYMENT WAS IN KEEPING WITH PLANS WHICH I DISCUSSED WITH HIM IN FEBRUARY 1972 ALTHOUGH THE EARLIER SCHEDULE HAD BEEN DISRUPTED BY THE SUBSEQUENT COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE IN VIETNAM. I ALSO NOTED THAT OUR F-4'S WOULD REMAIN AT CCK AIR BASE AS LONG AS

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REQUIRED UNDER THE TERMS OF OUR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING,

AND THAT THERE WOULD BE NO CHANGE IN OUR COMMITMENTS OR ABILITY TO MEET THEM.

2. PREMIER WHO WAS EXCEPTIONALLY DIRECT AND VERY ALERT COMMENTED THAT THE 374TH HAD BEEN BROUGHT INTO TAIWAN AT US REQUEST AND OBVIOUSLY ITS WITHDRAWAL WAS FULLY WITHIN US AUTHORITY. NEVERTHELESS, HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT POTENTIALLY UNHELPFUL SIDE EFFECTS. IF ALL UNITS WITHDRAWN FROM TAIWAN WERE REDEPLOYED TO THE US, HE SAW NO PARTICULAR DIFFICULTY; BUT IF THEY WERE MERELY MOVED TO RELATIVELY NEARBY POINTS IN ASIA, SUCH AS CLARK AND KADENA, IT WOULD AROUSE SPECULATION AND MISGIVING NOT ONLY WITH THE PRESS BUT ALSO WITHIN THE GRC. ALMOST AUTOMATICALLY, PEOPLE WOULD READ POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE INTO THE MOVE. CCK STATED THAT IF OUR REDEPLOYMENT WAS IN RESPONSE TO THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE, HE HOPED WE WOULD TELL HIM STRAIGHT-FORWARDLY.

3. I PROMISED TO REPORT THE PREMIER'S VIEWS TO WASHINGTON AND SAID I MIGHT HAVE A CHANCE TO DISCUSS THEM MYSELF WHILE I WAS BACK ON CONSULTATION. NEVERTHELESS, I WANTED TO ASSURE HIM THAT THE REDEPLOYMENT IN NO WAY REFLECTED ANY COMPLAINT ON OUR PART ABOUT ROC HOSPITALITY AND COOPERATION; NOR WAS IT MADE SIMPLY ON POLITICAL GROUNDS. THE REDEPLOYMENT WAS A RESULT OF REDUCED TENSIONS IN THE AREA AND WAS PART OF A GRADUAL REDUCTION OF OUR FORWARD TACTICAL UNITS. FINAL LOCATION OF AIRCRAFT WITHDRAWN FROM TAIWAN WOULD HAVE TO BE DETERMINED IN LIGHT OF OUR OVERALL MILITARY REQUIREMENTS IN EAST ASIA.

4. AS FOR THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE, I SAID IT WAS NOT MENTIONED IN MY INSTRUCTIONS WHICH WERE PHRASED IN TERMS OF CHANGED REQUIREMENTS OF THE KIND I HAD MENTIONED TO HIM A YEAR AND A HALF AGO. I ACKNOWLEDGED THAT ONE COULD SAY THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE WAS INVOLVED IN THE SENSE THAT IT CONTRIBUTED TO LOWERING OF TENSION. HOWEVER, THE COMMUNIQUE DID NOT COMMIT US TO ANY PARTICULAR SCHEDULE OF REDEPLOYMENT. WE
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WERE THE SOLE JUDGE ON THIS MATTER AND OUR ACTIONS WOULD BE TAKEN IN TERMS OF US INTERESTS. IN SUM, THE 374TH TAW WAS NOT DIRECTLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE DEFENSE OF TAIWAN BUT WAS A REGIONAL FORCE, THE NEED FOR WHICH HAD BEEN GREATLY REDUCED BY SOUTHEAST ASIA DEVELOPMENTS.

5. PREMIER MADE TWO POINTS IN CONCLUSION: A) HE

SAID HIS CONCERN WOULD BE REDUCED IF THE BULK OF THE REDEPLOYED PLANES RETURNED TO THE US AND NOT TO NEARBY PLACES SUCH AS THE PHILIPPINES AND OKINAWA; AND B) HE WONDERED WHETHER IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO MAKE ONE SINGLE ANNOUNCEMENT SHORTLY AFTER AUGUST 15, SUCH ANNOUNCEMENT TO STATE THAT SINCE US REQUIREMENTS FOR TACTICAL AIRLIFT IN THIS AREA WERE DOWN, UNITS PERFORMING THIS FUNCTION WERE BEING VEADUALLY PHASED OUT OF TAIWAN. I REPLIED THAT I DID NOT KNOW WHETHER THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE BUT WOULD REPORT THE SUGGESTION TO WASHINGTON IMMEDIATELY.

6. COMMENT: PREMIER WAS SOMEWHAT MORE EXERCISED THAN I HAD EXPECTED AND WAS CLEARLY THINKING ON HIS FEET AS TO WAYS TO LIMIT THE DAMAGE TO HIS POSITION. I REALIZE THERE ARE MANY CONSIDERATIONS INVOLVED IN ANY POSSIBLE ANNOUNCEMENT BUT URGE THAT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO HIS SUGGESTION FOR ONE SINGLE, BROAD, GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENT TO BE ISSUED SOME TIME THIS MONTH RATHER THAN LATE IN THE YEAR. ALTHOUGH AN ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSISTENT WITH THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE AIRCRAFT MAY BE ULTIMATELY DEPLOYED TO THE OTHER NEARBY LOCATIONS, UNDOUBTEDLY THIS CIRCUMSTANCE WOULD CAUSE THE ROC LESS TROUBLE IF THERE WERE SOME LAPSE OF TIME BETWEEN A GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF PROSPECTIVE WITHDRAWAL FROM TAIWAN AND ANY ACTUAL MOVE TO OTHER NEARBY BASES. THE TIME LAG BETWEEN AN EARLY GENERALIZED ANNOUNCEMENT AND LATER QUIET IMPLEMENTATION WOULD GREATLY SOFTEN THE ADVERSE IMPACT HERE.
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